

Doctoral Scholars Program

What is the doctoral scholars program?

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) Doctoral Scholars Program is a cooperative interstate venture that seeks to support and encourage minority students to pursue doctoral degrees. The program also seeks to increase the number of minorities employed as college faculty and administrators. Students receive scholarships and other financial support to attend universities throughout the southern region and in some mid-west states. The SREB program is part of a national effort to increase the number of minority candidates for higher education positions.

How many Kentucky students are served by the program?

Currently Kentucky has 27 students in the program; 14 are enrolled at the University of Kentucky and 13 at the University of Louisville. According to SREB, as of September 2005, the program has served 64 scholars in Kentucky. Twenty-eight Kentucky scholars have completed Ph.D. programs. Six students are expected to earn their degree by May 2006.

How does the program work?

The Council on Postsecondary Education, the University of Kentucky, and the University of Louisville jointly implement the program. An ethnic minority student who is a U.S. citizen (Native American, Hispanic, Asian American, or African American), holds or will receive a bachelor's or master's degree from a regionally accredited college or university, and has been accepted into a Ph.D. program at UK or UofL is eligible to apply. Specific areas of concentration include science, math, math or science education, and engineering. Other areas also may be considered. The SREB Doctoral Scholars Program is not designed to support students pursuing professional degrees.

A scholar has two primary obligations upon selection to the program: devote full-time attention to the completion of the academic requirements and attend and participate in the annual Doctoral Scholars Program/Compact for Faculty Diversity Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. After nearly 10 years of operation, the program retention rate is over 90 percent; national data show that only 50 percent of all Ph.D. students complete the degree and only 37 percent of minorities finish.

Why is a program like this needed?

The program is needed to build a pipeline of properly credentialed individuals to fill faculty and administrative positions at Kentucky's postsecondary institutions. Faculty diversity is a major consideration for Kentucky's public institutions. Institutional presidents informed the Council's Committee on Equal Opportunities about the difficulties of recruiting African American faculty. The SREB Doctoral Scholars Program also supports the Partnership Agreement between the Commonwealth and the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, as well as the Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities.

What is the Council's request?

The Council seeks an increase in General Funds of \$233,400 in FY 2006-07 of recurring funds to cover program costs. Currently, only four students receive General Fund support. Additional funding is needed to support the 23 students who do not receive recurring General Fund support.



Photo source: SREB

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